THE

Life & Death

OF

That Pious, Reverend, Learned and Laborious Minister of the Gospel,

Mr. RICHARD BAXTER.

Who departed this Life Decemb. 8, 1691. and of his Age 77.

[redacted]

Heb. XI. 4.

He being Dead, yet speaketh.

Licensed according to Order.

LONDON, Printed for *Randal Taylor*, near *Stationers-Hall*, 1692.

THE LIFE and DEATH OF Mr. *Richard Baxter.*

AS there is but a small part of the Earth Gold, so are there but a few Men good; and of these few which, to our Apprehension, seem Excellent, most may be but counterfeit Christians, Holy, but *ad extra*; their Work but *Hay* and *Stubble*, their Faith built upon a *Sandy Foundation*; and found but a vain Confidence in the day of Visitation. But this Pious, Reverend, Learned and Laborious Minister of the Gospel, Mr. *Richard Baxter*,

has given such Evidences of his Labour, Zeal and Piety, that it is impossible a pretended Christian, or formal Hypocrite could either have done or endured what he hath, in his Pilgrimage towards Heaven, or the *Promised Land*. He ascended those Steps of *Jacob's* Ladder, which a giddy headed, or unstable minded Sophister could not Contemplate. As for his *Life*, it may be read in his copious and holy Writings; a durable Monument of everlasting Memory: Neither is any further Discription necessary to make his Name famous to future Ages. Yet, for the satisfaction of those who admir'd him when alive, and yet bear a Respect to his Memory now when Dead, I have here set down his Life, in short Characters, for their satisfaction: But *ex ungue Leonem*, one may know, by this short Narative, what the whole course of his Life hath been.

That

That Laborious Minister of the Gospel *Mr. Richard Baxter*, was descended of a good Honest Pedegree, born in a small Village in *Worcestershire*, the 12th of *November*, 1614. No sooner began he to be capable to know good from evil, than he was observed to send out the fragrant Blossoms of an holy Life, in Praying, Speaking Reverendly of his Creator, and reprehending others for rash Oaths, and obscene Speeches, which was no small matter of Joy to his Parents, who were careful to send him to School when but a small Child, and keep a watchful Eye over him, lest he should have been Tainted with the small habits of Sin and Uncleanness when in his younger years.

All his Father did intend him for, was some honest Trade, whereby to gain his Living, without being a burden to his Friends; but Providence had ordered it otherwise; for

for he had such a Natural Inclination to Learning, that (notwithstanding his Parents Reproofs for so frequent Reading and Studying) it was his constant Exercise, without intermission, so that in a very short time, he was more Learned in the Languages, and had greater Knowledg in Theology than those who had spent twenty years in prosecuting that which he attained in half the time. So that though he had not the Advantage of *Vain Philosophy* (as the Apostle calls it), or *University-Learning*; yet was his sacred Knowledge in that Degree of Eminence, such as few of the University *Candidates* ever attain to. When he was but a Young Man, he was unanimously, by all the Holy Pastors of his Acquaintance, Invited, and Chosen to be a Labourer in Christ's Vineyard. But quickly after the Civil War began, and the Face of Affairs so long dropt Blood, that the whole Kingdom, Church and State

was

was in Confusion, and the Government nothing but *Anarchy*; Which kept him from any setled Flock in Christ's Holy Mountain; therefore went, as a Preacher of the *Gospel of Peace*, in the time of War, with the Parliament's Army; praying, that *God* might compose the Differences betwixt his Anointed and his People, and make up the Breach with the Arm of his own Omnipotence. Thus his Neutrality made him sometimes to be look'd upon, by some Evil-minded Schismaticks, as a Malignant. But he still behav'd himself so much a prudent Christian, that no Accusation could penetrate his Reputation, God's Glory and the People's Good being the only Design of his Soul.

After the War was over, he was fixt Minister of *Kederminster*, where his Ministry was highly prized, much commended, yet more efficacious among his Hearers; whom, on his first

first Entrance, he found both Ignorant, Obstinate, and void of all Godliness: but afterwards, in a short space, by God's Blessing, wrought so on them, that they were renewed in the Inner Man, became New Creatures, and made that which once was their Glory, their Shame.

He was very careful in Catechising the Families under his Protection, especially Young People, by sowing the Seeds of Grace, before the *Wicked One* had gain'd Ground upon their Corrupt Natures: Yet, (as it is said by the *Apostle*) he went *from House to House*, teaching and instructing in the Knowledge of God, perswading stedfastly to persevere in the good Work of Regeneration. And notwithstanding, that he was a Dissenter from Ecclesiastical Government, yet did he so behave himself, that no Man had ought wherewithal to stain his Reputation; but gain'd

so

so much their Affection, that by his Example and Advice, he quench'd the smoaking Animosities of all Contenders, and united, in the *Bond of Peace*, both Episcopal, Presbyterian and Congregational Parties, oft regretting, that Christ's Seamless Coat (which his Crucifiers would not tear) should be rent in Schisms.

He continued at *Kederminster* till the Year 1660. in which time (several Storms molesting the Church, after the Restauration of K. *Charles* II.) he went to *London*. And many Endeavours, that time, being used, in order to an Agreement betwixt the Episcopal and Presbyterian Ministers, Mr. *Baxter* behaved himself as a good Christian, and a blessed Peace-Maker: And, though his Labour was in vain, the Reward of his Willing Mind was sure, and his Name made more Famous among his Enemies.

In the Year 1660. *September* 10 he married, at *Bennet Fink*, in *London*, *Margaret*, Daughter to *Francis Charleton*, Esq; having been Contracted before, in the presence of some Christian Friends. But before the Marriage, these Conditions were concluded upon: *First*, That Mr. *Baxter* should have nothing which before Marriage was hers; that so he (who wanted no Outward Supplies) might not so much as seem to marry her for Covetousness. *Secondly*, That she should so order her Affairs, that he might not be entangled in any Law-Suits about the same. *Thirdly*, That she should expect none of his Time, which his Ministerial Employment should call him for.

After the Marriage was over, several of his Wife's Relations did look upon Mr. *Baxter* as Inferior to the Lady whom he had married; therefore the Lord Chancellor *Clarendon* (who had before proffer'd him a Bishoprick,

ſhoprick, ſo he would conform) with all Flouriſhes of Oratory, did again perſwade him to acquieſce to his Requeſts, and accept of a Rich Benefice, as the Church Government was then eſtabliſhed.

Thus it is evident, by his refuſing a Biſhoprick, and renouncing his Wife's Portion, which was 2000 *l.* that he did not marry upon any Worldly Account, as by the Method of their Wooing, doth plainly appear. For ſhe, being a Pious and Devout Young Lady, fell in Love with him, upon the Account of his Holy Life and Fervency of Preaching; and therefore ſent a Friend to acquaint him with her Reſpects, in his Chamber. His Anſwer was, That ſince he had paſt his Youth in Celebacy, it would be reputed Madneſs in him, to marry a Young Woman, whilſt he could not diſcharge the Part of a Husband in all Reſpects. She at the Door, over-hearing, en-

ncred the Chamber, and told him, *Dear Mr. Baxter, I proteſt, with a ſincere and real Heart, I do not make a Tender of my ſelf to you, upon any Worldly or Carnal Account; but to have a more frequent Converſe with ſo Holy and Prudent a Yoak-fellow, to aſſiſt me in my Way to Heaven, and to keep me ſtedfaſt in my perſeverance; which I deſign for God's Glory, and my own Soul's Good.* At this Mr. *Baxter* was at a ſtand, and convinc'd, that, with a good Conſcience, he could not deſpiſe ſo Zealous a proffer, ſpringing from ſo pure a Fountain of Love. Now, though ſome ill-minded people, make a bad Conſtruction of this Marriage (like Waſps, who ſuck Poyſon from the ſweeteſt Herbs) it is clear, That this Gentlewoman had no Worldly or Carnal Deſign in this her matching with Mr. *Baxter*, an Old, Poor, Ejected Miniſter, deſcended of no great Family, after the heat of his Youth was over. Let people talk as they will, it is evi-

dent

dent on both sides, that the Matriage was rather a Demonstration of Self-Denial than Self-Interest.

The first House they took was in *Moorfields*; from thence they removed to another at *Acton*, and shortly after to another. So that his House being frequented, or haunted with evil persecuting Spirits, he was forced to remove Nine times in Three years space.

In the year 1661. a Parliament was call'd, wherein was past the *Act of Uniformity*. About this time Mr. *Baxter* was sent to the Common Goal, where he lay a considerable time; but neither he nor his Wife were seen to be troubled for suffering for *Christ's Sake*, but chearfully submitted to Providence, and bore the Cross patiently.

Quickly after the *Parliament* made a New and sharper *Act* against *Dissenters*,

senters, whereupon Mr. *Baxter* was forced to remove to another County, his Wife securing some small part of his Goods from being seized, by conveying them privately to *Totteridge*, where she endured such hardships as few poor People Endure. They could have no House, but part of a poor Farmers, where the Chimnies did Smoak so extreamly as was very prejudicial to her Health; For the Smoak was so gross, that it almost Choak'd them; and Mrs. *Baxter* had ever a great straitness in her Lungs, which occasioned the Smoak to be the more Offensive to her: Yet such was her Charity to her poor Landlady, that she placed out her Son an Apprentice, who afterwards Lived well.

When the King's gracious *Declaration* came forth, which gave to *Nonconformists* Licenses to Preach and to Build places to Preach in. Mr. *Baxter* took a House in *Southampton-*

hampton-Square (where he continued till his Wife Died) and the Market-house in St. *James's Market* for a Meeting house. From this place the Lord was pleased, e're long, to remove him by a strange Providence, for the Roof of the House being of a vast height, and ill contrived, the weight lying much upon one Beam, in the midst of the Floor, and the place being greatly Crouded, the Beam gave so great a Crack that it put all the People into a Fright; but a second Crack set them all a running; Mr. *Baxter* reproved their inordinate Fears, and would have gone on in Preaching, had he not been dissuaded. The like formerly befel him in St. *Dunston's* in the *West*, where the Church-Steple fell, and was like to overthrow the Church and smuther all his Hearers, had not Divine Providence order'd it otherwise.

Mr. *Baxter* removed thence, and took a House in *Oxendon street*, for which

which he gave 30 pounds *per Annum*, Ground-rent; and before he could fit it for his Function, he laid out 300 pound; but before he was settled in the place, he was forced to Remove, and Mr. *Siddon*, a Stranger, who first Preached in the House, in Mr. *Baxter*'s Absence, was Apprehended by three Justices of the Peace, and sent to Prison.

Mr. *Baxter* found that he could not keep up Preaching in that place and was glad that Dr. *Lloyd* and his Parishioners would accept of it, for the place of their publick Worship, asking them no more Rent than he was to pay for the Ground, and the Room over it for a *Vestry*, demanding nothing for all the Mony laid out for the Building; yet the purchase of the *Fee Simple*, for the Ground on which the Chappel was Built, cost Mr. *Baxter* 200 pounds, and 200 more for the Ground adjoyning, to his great loss.

Then

Then he hired a House in *Swallow-street*, that the poor People thereabouts, with whom he began, with considerable Success, might still be Instructed; but there he was kept out by some Officers, who stood at the Door, with a *Justice's* Warrant. Therefore being hurried from one place to another, and driven to his Wits end, he took no certain Dwelling-place, but Preached in several Meeting-Houses, as he was invited, but was most desirous to be at Dr. *Manton's* Meeting-house in *Covent-Garden*, that his former poor Flock, about *St. James's* might come there and hear him, which they did, to his great Satisfaction.

It was observed of him that for the first nine or ten years, after his Ejection, he never took any Gift to supply his necessity, except 10 pound *per Annum*, from *Serjeant Fountain*, which importunity forced him too.

When Warrants were out to Distrain his Goods for Fines for his

Preaching, he did undergo the loſs without repining, only his Library he was willing to ſave, which his Wife afterwards freely gave to the Colledg of *New England*, and other Friends at home.

And though the paying 20 pounds, beſides Impriſonment, for every Sermon Preached, was the penalty impoſed on every Diſſenter; yet neither Goods, Mony, Impriſonment, could terrifie the Zealous *Baxter* from following his Spiritual Employment.

His Wife fell Sick on *Friday*, June 3*d*, 1681. and Died *June* 14*th*. her Death occaſion'd much Grief to Mr. *Baxter*; he Mourn'd, but not like an Infidel; hoping again to ſee her, and go to her, but not her to come to him.

She was Buried *June* 17*th*, in *Chriſt's Church*, in the Ruins of her Mothers Grave; on which ſhe had cauſed a fair, rich, and large Marble-ſtone to be laid, *Anno*. 1661.

The

The Rehearſal of Mr. *Baxter's* Afflictions were but a Repetition of the ſame Sorrow; for he was another *Athanaſius* in reſpect of his Sufferings; wherein he rejoyced. He was ſtill the Butt of the Enemy of Mankind, who ſtirred up his Inſtruments to ſtop him in his Miniſtry, and conſtant Labours in God's Vineyard; till in the Reign of K. *James* II. (Liberty of Conſcience being proclaimed to all Subjects, for no good end) God, who catcheth the Wiſe in their own Craftineſs, opened a *Door of utterance* to all his faithful Miniſters, among whom Mr. *Richard Baxter*, though Old and Weak (yet ſtrong in Faith, and conſtant in perſeverance) renewed his Strength and Endeavours, preaching in divers places, as occaſion offered, till he ſetled at laſt in *Charter-Houſe-Yard* in *London*, where he preached with great Fervency of Spirit every *Sabbath-day* at his Meeting-houſe; which was more crouded than any Cathedral in *England*.

Here he continued several years, to the unspeakable Joy of all good Christians. But about the latter end of *September* 1691. he could hardly, without help, ascend the Pulpit. At last, finding his Natural Strength quite decayed, and that his Pilgrimage was near an End, he took Bed, with these Words in his Mouth, *Lord, now lettest thou thy Servant depart in Peace, according to thy Word; for mine eyes have seen thy Salvation.* Thus he continued sick and weak in Body, but strong in the Inward Man, till he departed this Life, *December* 8, 1691. at his Dwelling House in *Charter-House-Yard, London*, whence he was carried to *Merchant-Taylors-Hall*, and on *Decem.* 17. to *Christ-Church* (several thousands mourning after the Corps) where he was decently buried near his Wife's Grave; all lamenting his Death, but none staining his Memory.

Of his comfortable Expressions, Ejaculations, and sound Advice to his Bre-

Brethren, during the time of his Sickneſs, many Worthy Miniſters can give an Account. Some are ſet down in his *Funeral Sermon*, preached by that Worthy Servant of *Jeſus Chriſt*, *William Bates*, D.D. who was wrapt up in Love with him, even to his Grave. His Words were Pious, his Writings Wonderful, and his Preaching ſo powerful, that he made his Hearers quake and tremble. He was both a *Barnabas* and a *Boanarges*, a *Son of Thunder* as well as of Conſolation. Wicked Men could not endure him, more than *Felix* could *Paul*, when he preached of *Righteouſneſs*, *Temperance and Judgment to come*. But had he been of the World, that lyeth in Wickedneſs, the wicked World had certainly Lov'd him: But becauſe his Affections were ſetled on a more ſublime Object, all Worldlings hated him (as they hated his *Redeemer*) without a Cauſe. He was more in love with Poverty than Riches; and the laſt *Sermon* he preached, was in contempt

tempt of Worldly Enjoyments; his Text being, *Luke* 16. 25. *Thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; therefore now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.*

His Days, in respect of any outward Felicity, were but a *Scene of Sorrow*, a *Holy Strife*, and a *Flood of Troubles*. He was persecuted from place to place, carried from one Prison to another, brought before Judges, Counsellors, and mighty Powers: He was reviled, mocked and scoffed; yet God gave him a Mouth, and Wisdom, which all his Adversaries could not gain-say, and the *Enemies of the Cross of Christ* could not withstand. Had he lived a *Roman Priest*, under Pope *Paul* III. he had been Canonized a Saint, *in Circulo per se*, and fill'd all his Ware-houses with *Works of Supererrogation*, and brought into his Temporal Treasury, more money than His 50000 Prostitutes, with their *Julio's per* month. In one word; His Birth

Birth was Credible, his Life was Venerable, and his Death was Comfortable. The Wicked live not half their Days, but he departed this Life in a good Old Age, and full of Days.

When the Church was over-clouded with Apostasie, a poor Man ask'd him, what was his Opinion of the Times: His Answer was, *There's no fear but all will be well, for Christ is at the right hand of the Father.*

A young *Oxford* Schollar, in Derision, propos'd to him a foolish Sophism, thus,

Ubique est Adverbium,
Sed Deus est Ubique,
Ergo, *Deus est Adverbium.*

His Answer was, Young man, if God be every where, have a care of taking his Name in vain, in his own presence.

He was a Man of great Parts and Prudence, and in his Life time, both spoke and wrote great Sense; but,

after

after his Death, though many Wits strove to extol his Worth in Verse and Elegies; none Wrote anything of Sense in his Commendation; his Worth being too sublime an Object for *Mars* quill; or at least the dull Wits of this Ignorant Age. I my self began to Write a Latin Elegy in his praise, but could not accomplish my desire; his *Excolatum* being ten Degrees above *Parnassus*. I wrote several Lines, whereof this was one,

Ædes erat Ædis, erat integra Conscio vita,
Os aurum, &c.

But could get no further.

MVSEVM BRITANNICVM